



Position Description

Job Information

Position Number:

Job Title: Vice President, Public Affairs, Strategy and Chief Communications Officer

Level: Executive/ VP

Reporting to: President, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Department: Public Affairs and Communications

Job Purpose

As a key member of the University of Ottawa Heart Institute (UOHI or Institute), the Vice President, Public Affairs, Strategy and Chief Communications Officer (VP or CCO) regularly reports and provides strategic public and media relations advice to the President & CEO, as well as maintains, protects, and enhances the UOHI corporate reputation, public profile, and brand by driving the entire portfolio team, and all public affairs, corporate and research communications, and marketing strategies.

The VP serves as a key media spokesperson to enable Institute strategy and promote the Institute's vision, strengths, visibility, and impact internally and externally, and further solidify French language services, marketing and communications plans as essential assets to create effective, accessible, and quality messages across clinical, education and research operations that are strategy driven.

The VP plays a central role in leading the public affairs and communications department, public and media relations priorities and actionable goals, and is responsible for overseeing corporate positioning, special event programming, awareness campaigns, issues, and crisis management, and for sharing powerful information on social networks.

Key Responsibilities

Team Development and Supervision (5-10%)

Supervise and ensure the mentoring of the Public Affairs and Communications teams, and attract, engage, develop, and retain performing staff to support reputable service delivery.

Hire, manage, and assess the performance of Public Affairs and Communications staff, and ensure commitment to team effectiveness, growth, and continual quality improvement.

Champion two-way communication solutions to foster a culture of creativity, communication learning and innovation, and to facilitate a collaborative and team-oriented environment.

Marketing, Communications and Strategic Initiatives (20-25%)

Strengthen the UOHI brand positioning statements to capture the Institute's unique value internally and externally, and deploy strategies to continually improve its public image.

Enhance all aspects of communications, including organizational visibility internally and externally, and promotion of key initiatives and alignment with the UOHI's strategic plan.

Oversee the development, implementation and dissemination of the communication and marketing plans to build a consistent public profile and identity across multiple platforms.

Work with IT to ensure the updating, protection and ethical digitalization of Intranet and external website contents, and digital communications to create trustworthy connections.

Develop advocacy and communications materials to raise awareness and understanding of the UOHI vision, mission, strategic plans, goals, objectives, and key success factors.

Enabling strategic direction and alignment, including working with the President and CEO and VPs to interface communication with program development and ensuring communication to staff and the public related to strategic priorities.

Provide strategic direction to the communications team to ensure the delivery of scientific or memorable/ impactful marketing messages, programming activities, and publications.

Proactive strategy development related to communications internally and externally.

Chair/ participate on regional communications committees to identify communication gaps, needs, and opportunities, and provide strategic advice, useful information, and feedback.

Liaison with sections of the institute such as the Foundation, Research, Prevention and other areas with communication initiatives.

Public and Media Relations (15-20%)

Provide senior level counsel to the executive team, on a wide range of public and media relations needs, to build credibility and appropriate rapport with a varied target audience.

Serve as key media relations spokespersons to ensure the UOHI's position is clearly articulated to promote the best interest and protect its reputation and inform the public.

Communicate with the public through various methods, such as advertisements, visual/ oral presentations, public statements, public broadcasting, social media, and press releases.

Partner with HR to launch talent sourcing strategies in a variety of media platforms, using diversified candidate sourcing channels to foster an engage, diverse and inclusive culture.

Oversee the production of corporate governance updates, news, headlines, insightful materials, and ensure media advocacy to advance public policy, education, and research.

Collaborate with academic institutions through shared projects and/or appointments, and contribute to the establishment of public relations integrated communications programs.

Create and post content for various media platforms, using digital tools/ social networks to drive noticeable stakeholder engagement, and share meaningful and critical information.

Crisis, Issues and Research Management (5-10%)

Collaborate with cross-functional teams, and key stakeholders to provide senior counsel on crisis situations, corporate positioning, media relations, and executive communications.

Provide strategic direction and expert advice on public affairs and communication issues, and information, crisis, and issue management to key internal and external stakeholders.

Monitor corporate governance and communication issues and oversee the dissemination of sensitive information, and the official public response to unexpected events or affairs.

Partner with executives to incorporate the public information strategy into the research and crisis communication plans, aligned with disclosure protocols/ emergency management plans.

Oversee the public information, and research communication plan in compliance with Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) regulations to ensure a safe research environment for the UOHI community, staff, and patients.

Monitor the UOHI research strategy and the crisis communication plan, and ensure public affairs support the UOHI research infrastructure network, crisis, and emergency response.

Participate in Administrative on-call for emergency management, and lead public affairs and communication plans for the corporate pandemic crisis and business continuity committees.

Provide effective management of the portfolio budget, HR, material, and financial resources to minimize operational service disruptions impacting internal and external stakeholders.

Research and French Language Services (10-15%)

Provide support to the French Language Services Board Committee, to promote and develop

English-to-French translation expertise, including scientific, clinical & technical interpretation.

Oversee the development, implementation and delivery of quality translation/ proofreading services, French training programs, and a French language designation management plan.

Build strategic alliances with the French Language Health Services Network of Ontario to advance French language in care service delivery, scientific and clinical research services.

Promote the Ontario's French Language Services Strategy to increase the UOHI's bilingual workforce capacity to continually improve French Language access and quality of services.

Oversee all aspects of the UOHI's public service agency status designated by the Ministry of Health (MOH) under the *French Language Services Act* to expand access to French language services.

Provide strategic bilingual (English and French) service and programming direction aimed to guarantee client, patient, and family access to quality services in both official languages.

Public Affairs and Stakeholder Relations (10-15%)

Provide timely expert and authoritative advice to the President & CEO to ensure effective high-level risk management of corporate reputation with internal and external audiences.

Develop and execute the public affairs strategy, and partner with the University of Ottawa, boards, and hospitals to promote internationalization and innovation research strategies.

Design and implement comprehensive public affairs programs and tactics that integrate earned media, grassroots advocacy, multi-stakeholders, advertising, and digital solutions.

Ensure proactive and up-to-date communications on public affairs and communication best practices to stakeholders in accordance with Board-approved policies and strategies.

Build strong relationships with the UOHI's affiliates (The University of Ottawa, The Ottawa Hospital), Auxiliary, Alumni, and core entities (Foundation, Research Corporation, Clinical).

Act as the liaison between the UOHI, the Trillium Boutique and Auxiliary Association and ensure the sharing, distribution, and translation of promotional and advertising materials.

Public and Special Event Management (5%)

Design and implement a variety of corporate approved events, public or private initiatives, using professionalism and ethics, in such a manner as to bring about the event success.

Lead the effective creation, planning and deployment of special event programming, (e.g., promotion of corporate activities, multimodal health awareness or fundraising campaigns).

Provide key support to the President & CEO through a variety of event marketing types, services and operations (e.g., virtual /physical townhall meetings, team-building events).

Job Requirements

Knowledge

A bachelor's or master's degree in public relations, public affairs, communications, journalism, French language, or related field(s).

Clear understanding of French and English language grammar and vocabulary.

Web Content Management System (CMS) certification, or equivalent competencies - other relevant combination of knowledge, strengths, skills, and experience.

Training or equivalent understanding of Information Management Systems.

Keep abreast of current public affairs and communication trends in markets and society.

Specialist knowledge of internal and external public relations, traditional and social media relations, and related communications methodologies, techniques, and best practices.

Mastery of social media and social networking websites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube channel) and related purposes, contents, and methods.

Demonstrated knowledge of the municipal, provincial, and federal government ecosystems.

In-depth knowledge of reputational risk management, crisis, and issues management.

Significant knowledge of issues facing health care and research in Canada, and abroad.

Grasp of the techniques and approaches that champion organizational changes.

Experience

A minimum of ten (10) years' experience in public affairs and communications or related activity, and at least 5 years of executive / senior advisory level management experience or related activity.

Successful experience leading and managing a team, including a hybrid work model.

Significant exposure working with Corporate Translation Services in English and French, including technical interpretation, internal and external communications.

Expertise developing, translating, and editing high-quality materials such as briefing notes, scientific papers, fact sheets, newsletters, promotion visuals, policies, and presentations.

Demonstrated experience in public speaking, social media marketing, and media relations.

Practical experience using search engine marketing and digital advertising platforms.

Extensive experience building positive relationships and working effectively with diverse stakeholders (e.g., board of directors, executive team, health services).

Strong experience in managing sensitive and complex issues, and crisis management.

Recent experience in the development and implementation of strategic public affairs, communications, and marketing plans.

Experience conducting media outreach, supporting the Institute's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and promoting and advancing Francophonie and bilingualism.

Skills and Abilities

Bilingual (English and French) – Speak confidently and write clearly.

Advanced language proficiency for academic, research, and professional purposes.

Exceptional visual, written, and oral communications skills in both official languages.

Inspirational leadership skills to motivate team members, and create content marketing. Strategic thinking and planning.

Solid interpersonal, collaborative, relationship-building, and team-building skills.

Excellent organizational, prioritization, problem solving, and decision-making skills.

Effective facilitation, negotiation, conflict resolution, and change management skills.

Significant competency in using computers, internet designs, websites, and applications.

Advanced digital communication, multi-media, and networking skills.

Results and service-oriented skills - capacity to work under pressure and meet deadlines.

Time management and willingness to work a flexible schedule.

Work Environment

Hybrid, healthcare, university, research, and office environment. Occasional Travel.